DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 473 049 CS 511 788

AUTHOR	Scherff, Lisa
TITLE	National Standards + State Standards + 2 Subjects + 2 Instructors = One Good Planning Experience for Preservice Teachers.
PUB DATE	2002-11-00
NOTE	10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English (92nd, Atlanta, GA, November 21-26, 2002).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Group Activities; Higher Education; Instructional Innovation; *Interdisciplinary Approach; Language Arts; Lesson Plans; *Methods Courses; Preservice Teachers; Scoring Rubrics; Social Studies; *State Standards; *Student Projects; Teacher Collaboration; *Thematic Approach; *Units of Study
IDENTIFIERS	*Florida; National Social Studies Standards

ABSTRACT

Two graduate teaching assistants (TAs)--one taught language arts methods and the other taught social studies methods--who were office mates at a large university in Florida formulated a plan to create one end-of-course project that would both satisfy requirements and combine the social studies and language arts. That way, students could see that both content areas could work together, and social studies might have a larger portion of the curriculum than otherwise planned. The two TAs put the students in groups of two or three and assigned them one of the 10 social studies content standards developed by the National Council for the Social Studies. Under this umbrella, the groups were to create a thematic unit related to Florida that combined the state's language arts and social studies standards (Sunshine State Standards) in at least five lesson plans. Units were graded on a scale of 1-100, with opportunities to revise before the final product was presented to the class and turned in. Specific components that were required include lesson plans, writing in multiple genres, at least five literature-related sources, a written proposal and justification, and ESOL/ESE modifications. Additional attributes that were noted were quality, clarity, and structure of the lesson plans, the value of the material and activities included, appropriate evaluation of learning, and efficient use of class time. Most groups were able to develop an interdisciplinary unit that equally emphasized both content areas, and held true to the state of Florida as a part of the theme. Contains 6 references. Appended are the theme unit assignment and rubrics. (NKA)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 473 049

National Standards + State Standards + 2 Subjects + 2 Instructors = One Good Planning Experience for Preservice Teachers

Lisa Scherff
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

A Paper Presented at the 92nd Annual Convention of

The National Council of Teachers of English

November 21-26, 2002
Atlanta, GA

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L. Scherff

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CS 511 788

National Standards + State Standards + 2 Subjects + 2 Instructors =
One Good Planning Experience for Preservice Teachers

Lisa Scherff
University of Tennessee

In his most recent book, *Testing Is Not Teaching: What Should Count in Education*, Donald Graves focuses attention on how narrow standards and testing negatively impact teachers and students. He writes, "Normed assessments tied to high-stakes rewards have turned teachers' attention away from what should be their primary concerns—expressive ability, long thinking, and skilled integration of learning into life" (p. 38). Instead, "when evaluation is constant throughout the development of a work, students gain greater proficiency in fine-tuning their judgments and developing new rubrics for evaluation" (p. 29). Graves' beliefs echo those of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). In a position statement (1978) the authors outline three (testing-related) threats to the contribution of social studies:

1. That an emphasis on the testing of reading and mathematics will reduce resources (time, materials, and teachers) for social studies.
2. That a very narrow range of social studies content will be emphasized.
3. That emphasis on a low level of mastery by all students will narrow the range of skills included in the social studies curriculum.

Outside columnists and commentators, like Martin L. Gross, criticize schools and teachers (rather than testing) for "narrowing the content." However, the NCSS advocates the utilization of many facets of social studies calling for "the development of skills and attitudes required for competent, participatory citizenship in our democratic society and in the global community. Social studies programs designed to educate for effective democratic citizenship emphasize gathering information from a variety of disciplines and experiences along with thinking, decision making, communication, social interaction, and civic participation" (1991). The organization developed ten content standards, summarized below, as a foundation for thorough and well-developed curricula.

I. CULTURE. The study of culture prepares students to answer questions such as: What are the common characteristics of different cultures? How do belief systems, such as religion or political ideals, influence other parts of the culture? What does language tell us about the culture?

II. TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE. Human beings seek to understand their historical roots and to locate themselves in time. Knowing how to read and reconstruct the past allows one to develop a historical perspective and to answer questions such as: Who am I? What happened in the past?

III. PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS. The study of people, places, and human-environment interactions assists students as they create their spatial views and geographic perspectives of the world beyond their personal locations. Students need the knowledge, skills, and understanding to answer questions such as: Where are things located? Why are they located where they are?

IV. INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY. Personal identity is shaped by one's culture, by groups, and by institutional influences. Students should consider such questions as: How do people learn? Why do people behave as they do?

V. INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS. Institutions such as schools, churches, families, government agencies, and the courts play an integral role in people's lives. It is important that students learn how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, how they influence individuals and culture, and how they are maintained or changed. Students may address questions such as: How am I influenced by institutions? What is my role in institutional change?

VI. POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE. Understanding the historical development of structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary U.S. society and other parts of the world is essential for developing civic competence. In this theme, students answer questions such as: What is power? What forms does it take? Who holds it?

VII. PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION, AND CONSUMPTION. Because people have wants that often exceed the resources available to them, a variety of ways have evolved to answer such questions as: What is to be produced? How is production organized?

VIII. SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY. Modern life as we know it would be impossible without technology and the science that supports it. But technology brings with it many questions: Is new technology always better than old? How can we cope with the ever-increasing pace of change?

IX. GLOBAL CONNECTIONS. The realities of global interdependence require understanding of the increasingly important and diverse global connections among world societies and the frequent tension between national interests and global priorities. Students will need to be able to address such international issues as health care, the environment, human rights, economic competition and interdependence, age-old ethnic enmities, and political and military alliances.

X. CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES. An understanding of civic ideals and practices of citizenship is critical to full participation in society and is a central purpose of the social studies. Students confront such questions as: What is civic participation, and how can I be involved? What is the balance between rights and responsibilities?

Although in 2000, my office mate, Anna Blackman, and I had not read the Graves or NCSS positions, we knew that Florida's system of testing was impacting the curriculum. As doctoral students at a large university in Florida, we had the opportunity to spend a large amount of time discussing the education of ourselves, our preservice teachers, and K-12 students. At that time I was a full time public school teacher and graduate student, and a part time teaching assistant for a language arts methods course. In the public schools I experienced first-hand mandated practice for the reading portion of the state assessment. Much of it was similar to what Linda McNeil (2000) documented in Texas—workbooks, worksheets, practice tests, special remedial classes for students who had failed the test, and outside consultants brought in to help raise test scores.

Anna, who taught the social studies methods course, and was a former elementary school teacher, constantly heard from her preservice teachers who were out in the schools about the lack of time for social studies due to increased time for reading and mathematics test preparation. They were frustrated at their inability to utilize wonderful social studies lessons, and their futures as simple "test-prep" robots.

As teaching assistants, Anna and I started talking about how little some of us in the department knew about one another's courses. Because our students met in blocks, and our classes met on the same days, we began to formulate a plan to create one end-of-course project that would satisfy both our requirements and combine the social studies and language arts. That way, students could see that both content areas could work

together, and social studies might have a larger portion of the curriculum than otherwise planned.

The Project

In both courses students were required to complete lesson plans, teaching presentations, and some type of cumulative assignment. Rather than ask students to submit separate final projects for two courses, we decided to create one, end-of-course interdisciplinary unit integrating social studies and language arts lessons. The first task was to decide what we wanted our students to know and be able to do. Much like what the NCSS wanted for K-12 students, we wanted our classrooms, and this project, to be ones in "which students participate in higher order thinking and in which learning activities . . . engage and challenge them . . . and evaluation should be based on clearly formulated curriculum objectives that social studies professionals have developed and adopted" (NCSS, 1991).

Thus, we chose to put the students in groups of two or three and assign them one of the ten social studies content standards. Under this umbrella, the groups were to create a thematic unit related to Florida that combined our state's language arts and social studies standards (Sunshine State Standards) in at least five lesson plans. We chose to limit the unit to our state for several reasons: most students planned to remain in the state after graduation; if they taught in Florida their units would be relevant to students' lives; and, because our university was located in the state's capital we had access to a tremendous amount of resources (museums, government facilities, documents, etc.).

The units were graded on a scale of 1-100, with opportunities to revise before the final product was presented to the class and turned in. Specific components that were required include lesson plans, writing in multiple genres, at least five literature-related sources, a written proposal and justification, and ESOL/ESE modifications (for descriptions and rubric see Appendix). We looked for additional attributes—quality, clarity, and structure of the lesson plans, the value of the material and activities included, appropriate evaluation of learning, and efficient use of class time.

- Quality, Clarity, and Structure of Lessons: Are the objectives clear? Are the lessons structured in such a way that someone else could teach them?
- Value of Materials and Activities: Are materials and activities appropriate for the objectives? Does the presentation of the unit demonstrate that you (preservice teachers) have been thorough in determining what is important in this curriculum area and what the students need to know? Is there a match between what is important and how students spend their time in the lessons? Have you selected worthwhile lessons over "cute" ones?
- Appropriate Evaluation of Learning: Have you started with the "end" in mind? Do your assessments and evaluations go beyond simple *knowledge* questions? Are your measures of learning varied and consider differences among students?
- Efficient Use of Class Time: Do lessons flow at a good pace? Is time wasted? Do you provide smooth transitions between activities?

Evaluation of Project

Although some students criticized the project as being too sizeable a task, the final products were quite astounding. Most groups were able to develop an interdisciplinary unit that equally emphasized both content areas, and held true to the state of Florida as a part of the theme. For example, the group under the umbrella Civic Ideals and Practices created a unit on the Everglades that emphasized the public's role in its preservation. Another group of students using the Science, Technology, and Society strand focused on how Florida has grown and changed, and continues to grow and change as society advances.

After reflecting on the overall success of the units, we decided to repeat the same assignment with the next group of students. The main benefit of the project was a greater sense of what skills and qualities we wanted to see in our preservice teachers once they finished our classes. Another advantage of the unit was that it could be adapted for use with any grade level from grades 1-12. Most importantly, Anna and I felt we had established an ongoing dialog that might be repeated once we graduated and went our separate ways.

References

Fox, K. A., Williams, P. L., & Winters, L. (1978). *Graduation competency testing in the social studies.* National Council for the Social Studies. www.socialstudies.org.

Graves, D. H. (2002). *Testing is not teaching: What should count in education. Portsmouth*, NH: Heinemann.

Gross, M. L. (1999). *The conspiracy of ignorance: The failure of American public schools.* New York: Perennial.

Martorella, P. H. (2001). *Teaching Social Studies in Middle and Secondary Schools (3ed).* New York: Macmillan.

McNeil, L. (2000). *Contradictions of school reform.* New York: Routledge.

Testing and evaluation of social studies students. (1991). National Council for the Social Studies. www.socialstudies.org.

Appendix

FLORIDA SOCIAL STUDIES/LANGUAGE ARTS
THEME UNIT

Working with partners (no more than three to a group) you will develop a social studies based unit, aligned with the National Council for the Social Studies thematic strands (book on reserve) and the Sunshine State Standards for language arts. This unit needs to integrate both content areas in its lessons and follow the format of all your previous lesson plans. The components of the unit are as follows:

- 5 lesson plans all relating to the unit's theme
- Writing components must be included in all lessons (no repetition of writing genres)
- A minimum of 5 literature related sources used and listed
- Written proposal and justification (due no later than _____)
- Specific grade level and time span of unit
- Introductory activity (attention-grabbing activity in addition to lesson plans)
- Resource sheet (complete bibliography)
- List of all standards that apply
- ESOL/ESE modifications

This unit should be well organized and meaningful. Activities should focus on students' different learning styles and the teaching techniques to address them as well as the varied content covered throughout the semester.

Be prepared to teach the introductory activity of your unit to the rest of the class as if your peers were your own students. You are to provide a brief description of your strand before you begin your lesson. You will also be responsible for providing a copy of your unit to both instructors.

We look forward to reading your units!
Good Luck!

Total Points 100

Introductory activity	10
5 lessons	50
Proposal	5
Presentation of unit	5
Resources	5
SSS/Theme	5
ESOL/ESE	10
Overall quality	5
Literature related sources	5

7

RUBRIC FOR SOCIAL STUDIES/LANGUAGE ARTS UNIT

Group Members _____

Topic/Theme/Strand _____

CATEGORY	POINTS
Introductory Activity	0 2 4 6 8 10
5 lessons (10 points each)	5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50
Proposal	0 1 2 3 4 5
Presentation	0 1 2 3 4 5
Resources	0 1 2 3 4 5
SSS/Theme	0 2 4 6 8 10
ESOL/ESE modifications	0 1 2 3 4 5
Overall quality	0 1 2 3 4 5
Literature related sources	0 1 2 3 4 5

Total Points _____

Comments:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CS 511 788

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
(OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

Reproduction Release

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: National Standards + State Standards + 2 Subjects + 2 Instructors = One Great Planning Experience for Preservice Teachers	
Author(s): Lisa Scherff	
Corporate Source:	Publication Date: 11/2002

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, Resources in Education (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign in the indicated space following.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY SAMPLE TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY SAMPLE TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY SAMPLE TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
Level 1	Level 2A	Level 2B
☐	☐	☐
Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g. electronic) *and* paper copy.	Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only	Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproductic and dissemination in microfiche only
Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.		

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche, or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Signature: Lisa Scheff	Printed Name/Position/Title: Lisa Scherff, Ph.D.
Organization/Address: A418 Claxton Knoxville TN 37996-3442	Telephone: 865-974-8385 / Fax: 865-974-9718
	E-mail Address: escherff@utk.edu / Date: 2/11/03

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse: